

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method for examining a pruritic disease to diagnose opioid-based pruritis, comprising the steps of:

measuring concentrations of at least one κ -opioid peptides peptide and at least one of δ -opioid ~~peptides peptide~~, μ -opioid ~~peptides peptide~~, and or nociceptin in blood cells, body fluid, or tissue, and

calculating the ratio of said concentrations of at least one of δ -opioid peptides, μ -opioid peptides, and nociceptin to the concentration of κ -opioid peptides,

comparing said calculated ratio to a corresponding ratio in non-pruritic patients; and

diagnosing opioid-based pruritis where said calculated ratio is greater than said corresponding ratio.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 1, wherein said opioid peptides to be measured are a μ -opioid peptide and a κ -opioid peptide.

4. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 1, wherein said μ -opioid ~~peptides peptide~~ to be measured ~~are~~ is β -endorphin and said κ -opioid ~~peptides peptide~~ ~~are~~ is dynorphin A.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 1, wherein said pruritic disease is selected from the group consisting of pruritus with atopic dermatitis, neurodermatitis,

asteatosis, senile pruritus, insect bite, hyperesthesia optica, urticaria, prurigo, herpes, impetigo, eczema, tinea, lichen, psoriasis, scabies, acne vulgaris, malignant tumor, diabetes, hepatic disease, renal failure, hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, or pregnancy.

7-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 1, wherein said pruritic disease is selected from the group consisting of atopic dermatitis, renal failure, hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis.

13. (Currently Amended) A method for diagnosing the presence of a pruritic disease, comprising the steps of:

measuring concentrations of at least one κ -opioid ~~peptides~~ peptide and at least one of δ -opioid ~~peptides~~ peptide, μ -opioid ~~peptides~~ peptide, and or nociceptin in blood cells, body fluid, or tissue, ~~and~~

calculating the ratio of said concentrations of at least one of δ -opioid peptides, μ -opioid peptides, and nociceptin to the concentration of κ -opioid peptides,

comparing said calculated ratio to a corresponding ratio in non-pruritic patients; and

diagnosing the presence of pruritic disease where said calculated ratio is greater than said corresponding ratio.